

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 AGR-20

TRSE-00 IGA-02 RSR-01 /122 W
----- 107311

O R 311245Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2809

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 9175

STATE/AID

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, E/AID, CB, TH

SUBJ: RICE FOR CAMBODIA

REF: BANGKOK 12622

1. APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS TO CUT THROUGH DELAYS IN RICE EXPORTS TO CAMBODIA. WE ARE OF COURSE SXLL DISAPPOINTED IN THE ATTITUDE OF THAI AUTHORITIES AS RHORTED REFTTEL. FOR EXAMPLE, SINCE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET SIGNED A CONTRACT FOR 25,000 TONS WHICH THEY AGREED TO IN PRINCIPLE EARLIER, WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BE CONVINCING THAT RTG MEANS WHAT ITS REPRESENTATIVES SAY, NAMELY THAT THEY WOULD NOT LET THE CAMBODIANS GO WITHOUT RICE. THE STARK FACTS ARE THAT THE GKR MUST HAVE A FULL 25,000 MT OF RICE BY OCTOBER OR INDEED THE DURABILITY OF THE GKR WILL BE VERY MUCH IN DOUBT. IN THIS CASE THE RTG WILL NOT HAVE LOST RICE TO THE COMMUNISTS BUT PRESUMABLY WOULD SACRIFICE A GOOD DEAL MORE OF ITS NATIONAL INTEREST.

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2. WE ARE ALSO DISTURBED ABOUT THE CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN BY

THE THAIS TO SHIPMENT OF RICE TO BATTAMBANG OR OTHER BORDER AREAS IN CAMBODIA. WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT INDIVIDUAL FANK COMMANDERS MIGHT HAVE REQUESTED RICE FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES WE WOULD ASSUME THAT THE RTG WOULD NOT DIVERT RICE TO ANY AREAS OF CAMBODIA WITHOUT PROPER AUTHORIZATION FROM THE GKR. IN ANY EVENT THE RTG SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE FACT THE BATTAMBANG IS A RICE SURPLUS PROVINCE AND THE KHMER GOVERNMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO MOVE AS MUCH OF THE SURPLUS AS POSSIBLE FROM BATTAMBANG TO PHNOM PENH.

3. AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE THE GS, WHILE MUCH PREFERING REGULAR RICE, HAS NOT TURNED DOWN PARBOILED RICE. AS A MATTER OF RECORD PRESIDENT LON NOL'S MOST RECENT APPEAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT THE GKR WOULD ACCEPT PARBOILED RICE AS WELL AS BROKENS.

4. WITH TIME FAST RUNNING OUT, WE BELIEVE THAT A SUSTAINED APPROACH AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT WILL BE NECESSARY IF ANY RICE IS TO BE HAD WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS. THE RICE PROBLEM IN THAILAND IS AFTER ALL ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL, NOT ONE OF THE PROCUREMENT NUTS AND BOLTS. THE BEST METHOD OF FOCUSING THE THAIS ATTENTION TO THE USG INTEREST WOULD BE, IN OUR VIEW, A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION FROM WASHINGTON BUTTRESSED AS NECESSARY WITH TECHNICAL PEOPLE.

5. WE REITERATE OUR RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUEST THAT HIGH-LEVEL USG TEAM BE DESPATCHED FROM WASHINGTON TO DEAL WITH THE THAI GOVERNMENT AT HIGH LEVELS.

SWANK

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